Fariduddin 'Attar's

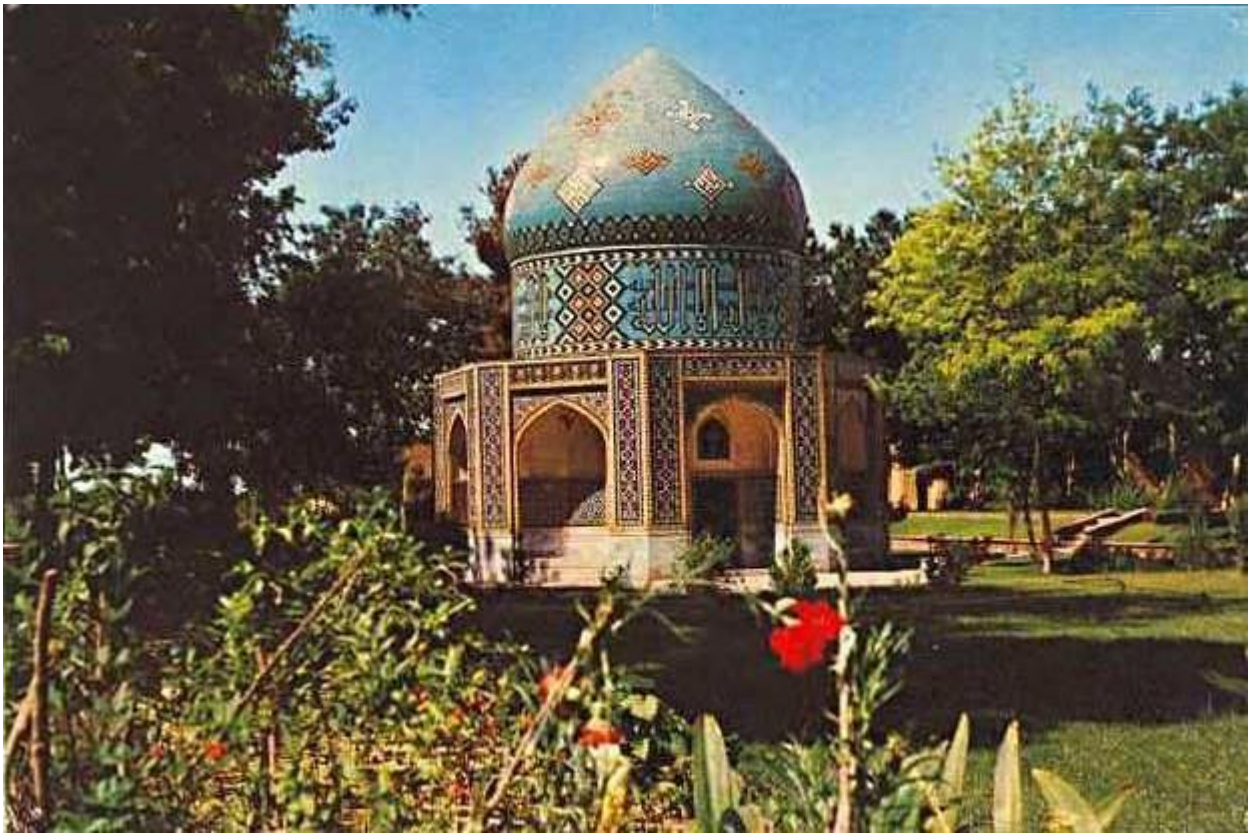
Tadhkaratul Aulia

or

Memories of Saints

Mohammed Abdul Hafeez

My research report on the book Tadhkirah al-Awliya of Farid al-Din Attar



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Introduction

Abu Hamid bin Abu Bakr Ibrahim Farid al-Din Attar was born in AD 1145 or 1146 in Nishapur province of Iranian Khorasan and died circa 1221. There is disagreement over the exact dates of his birth and death, but several sources confirm that he lived almost a hundred years. Different stories are told about the death of Attar. One common story is as follows. He was captured by a Mongol. One day someone came along and offered a thousand pieces of silver for him. Attar told the Mongol not to sell him for that price since the price was not right. The Mongol accepted Attar's words and did not sell him. Later, someone else came along and offered a sack of straw for him. Attar counseled the Mongol to sell him because that was how much he was worth. The Mongol soldier became very angry and cut off Attar's head. So he died to teach a lesson. Attar, much better-known by his pen names Farid al-Din and Attar ('the pharmacist'), was a Persian and Muslim poet, Sufi, theoretician of mysticism, and hagiographer.

Farid al-Din Attar was a Persian poet and Sufi mystic. Living during a turbulent era of political uncertainty, he turned inwards, exploring the realm of God and the paths to Him through mystical poetry. Little about Attar is known with certainty. His name (literally, 'perfume of roses') indicates that, like his father, he was a druggist and followed the calling of a medical man. Supposedly reliable Persian sources vary in the year of his death by a

span of 43 years. One reason for this uncertainty is that, unlike other Islamic poets, he did not write flattering panegyrics about his own life and greatness. This is to his personal credit, but unfortunate for the historian. We are certain only of the fact that he was born in Nishapur in north-eastern Persia; he passed 13 years of his youth in Mashad, and spent much of his life collecting the poetry of other Sufi mystics.

He was the son of a prosperous chemist, and got an excellent education in Arabic, theosophy and medicine. He helped his father in the store and on his father's death, took over its ownership. The people he helped in the pharmacy used to confide their troubles in Attar and this affected him deeply. Eventually, he abandoned his pharmacy and travelled widely to Kufa, Mecca, Damascus, Turkistan, and India, meeting Sufi sheikhs and returned promoting Sufi (Islamic mysticism) ideas to his home city of Nishapur.

Attar speaks of his own poetry in various contexts, including the epilogues of his long narrative poems. He confirms the guess likely to be made by every reader that he possessed an inexhaustible fund of thematic and verbal inspiration. He writes that when he composed his poems, more ideas came into his mind than he could possibly use. He also states that the effort of poetical composition threw him into a state of trance in which he could not sleep.

Like his contemporary Khaqani, Attar was not only convinced that his poetry had far surpassed all previous poetry, but that it was to be intrinsically unsurpassable at

any time in the future, seeing himself as the ‘seal of the poets’ and his poetry as the ‘seal of speech’.

The *Mantiq al-Tayr* (*The Conference of Birds*) written in the twelfth century by Farid al-Din Attar, a metaphorical tale of birds seeking a king (God) has inspired readers across time and around the world. This epic poem tells of a conference attended by all types of birds, who pose a series of questions to their leader, the hoopoe. The stories he tells in reply are allegories for the spiritual quest and its pitfalls. *Mantiq al-Tayr* or *The Conference of Birds* is

known as his most famous epic poem, which is consecrated to the tale of the spiritual quest of 30 birds to find their supreme sovereign, the simurgh. This work was modelled on the treatise on the birds composed half a century earlier by another Sufi master, Ahmad Ghazali (d. 1126 CE), founder of the ‘School of Love’ in Sufism. This epic masterpiece has also enjoyed several musical and theatrical adaptations in the West, while its stories are common subjects of illustration in Persian miniature painting. Attar’s most celebrated works are *The Conference of Birds* and a poem consisting of 4,600 couplets. The poem uses allegory to illustrate the Sufi doctrine of union between the human and the divine.

In the edition of R. P. Masani’s 1923 translation, noted Sufi scholar and spiritual teacher Andrew Harvey sets the scene. ‘The allegorical framework has the stark, luminous simplicity of Islami calligraphy. You may believe you are reading a witty, dazzling allegory. Very soon, however, if you reading with attention, you will realise you are being

drawn into a vision of a mystical path of the greatest depth.'

Attar is best known for his often-translated masterpiece *Mantiq al-Tayr*, literally meaning 'the conference of birds', still considered to be the best example of Sufi poetry in Persian language after Rumi's verses. Distinguished for his provocative and radical theology of love, many lines of Attar's poems and lyrics are cited independently as maxims in their own right. These paradoxical statements are still known by heart and sung by minstrels throughout Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and wherever Persian is spoken or understood, such as in the lands of the Indo-Pakistani subcontinent.

Other important works of this prolific poet include the *Elahi-Năma* (*Book of God*) and the *Mosibat-Nama* (*Book of Adversity*), both of which are mystical allegories similar in structure and form to *Mantiq al-Tayr*, the *Divan* (*Collected Poems*) and the famous prose work, *Tadhkerat al-Awliya*, an invaluable source of information on the early Sufis (abridged English translation, *Muslim Saints and Mystics*). From the point of view of ideas, literary themes, and style, Attar's influence was strongly felt not only in Persian literature but also in other Islamic literatures. His great prose work comprises the monumental compendium in Persian of biographies of famous Sufis, called *Tadhkerat al-Awliya*, or *Memoirs of the Saints*. Attar composed at least 45,000 couplets and many brilliant prose works in six important works of poetry and one major prose work.

Asrar Nameh (or the *Book of Mysteries*), which strings together a series of unconnected episodic stories, is known as Attar's least-known poems.

Attar's *Book of Adversity* (*Mosibat-Nama*) recounts the Sufi path in other terms, following the voyage of the contemplative wayfarer or 'pilgrim of thought' (salik-i-fikrat) through the mineral, vegetable, animal, human, and angelic realms.

Attar's divine book *Elahi-Năma* relates the story of a king who asks his six sons what they most desire. They all ask for worldly things, and the king exposes their vanity in a series of anecdotes.

The *Book of Selections* (*Mukhtar-Namah*) is a collection of over 2,000 quatrains (ruba'i) arranged in 50 chapters according to various mystical themes, and his collected poems (*Divan*) contains some 10,000 couplets which are notable for their depiction of visionary landscapes and heartrending evocations of the agonies and ecstasies of the mystic.

These poems are notable not only for their thematic unity, with usually just one mystical idea, or a series of related concepts from first verse to last line being elaborated progressively, but also for their esoteric hermeticism and unconventional religious values.

The attribution of the *Book of Khusraw* (*Khusraw-Namah*, a romance of the love between a Byzantine princess and a Persian prince, with almost no mystical content) to the poet has been rejected on convincing stylistic, linguistic and historical grounds, as spurious.

Attar's works had such an impact on both the Sufi community and the literate public at large that his fame soared soon after his death. He was imitated rapidly, so that today there are some 23 works falsely attributed to 'Attar' proven by modern scholars to be spurious or of doubtful authenticity. If we take merely the works that are unquestionably his, comprising a good 45,000 lines, the achievement is monumental.

However, the most important aspect of Attar's thought lies in the fact that all of his works are devoted to Sufism (Tasawuf) and throughout all of his genuine collected works, there does not exist even a single verse without a mystical colouring: in fact, Attar dedicated his entire literary existence to Sufism.

Farid al-din Attar is considered one of the pre-eminent mystical poets of the Persian literary tradition. The duration of his life is uncertain, though he can be placed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries C.E. born in Nishapur in what is today Iran.

Attar reached an age of over 70 and died a violent death in the massacre which the Mongols inflicted on Nishapur in April 1221. His mausoleum is located in Nishapur. It was built by Ali-Shir Nava'i in the sixteenth century.

Attar apparently was a pharmacist but little information about his personal life is known. Information about Attar's life is rare. He is mentioned by only two of his contemporaries, Awfi, and Khadja Nasir ud-Din Tusi.

Attar wrote a number of books on Sufism. According to his own writings, Sufism was meant to be a spiritual

search for a union with God. This search throughout history has taken many forms, but for Attar it was quite specific. Parallels may be seen with Dante. According to Attar, the spiritual pilgrimage of man brings him through seven successive ‘valleys’. First is the valley of quest, where ascetic means are adopted; then follows the valley of love, which may be compared to Dante’s earthly paradise; then follow the valleys of knowledge, detachment, unity, and amazement; and finally, the valley of annihilation of the self is reached. This is the supreme state of divine union with God. Sufism was meant to be an all-encompassing effort to live in a meaningful, religious frame of mind.

Attar died fleeing the Mongol hordes under Genghis Khan. Just before his death, Attar met a young poet, Rumi, to whom he gave some of his philosophical poems. Rumi perpetuated and added to the philosophical development of Sufism and the understanding of Attar. This is solid evidence that Rumi met Attar as a young boy as Rumi’s family abandoned the city of Balkh. On their way, Rumi’s father came to visit Attar. It is reported that Attar gave a copy of one of his mystic poetry books to the young Jalal Din (who was not called Rumi or Molana until much later when he became the great mystic and poet as he is known today). Their meeting has been reported by various sources, including by Rumi’s own son Hassam al-Din. Attar is one of the most prolific figures of Persian literature. He wrote over a hundred works of varying lengths from just a few pages to voluminous

tomes. Generally speaking, most of his books are popular and relatively easy to read.

Two of Attar's works have been translated into English. S. C. Nott translated *Conference of the Birds* (1954); and Bankey Behari (1961) and A. J. Arberry (1966) published abridged translations of *Memoirs of Saints*, both with excellent introductions. The best works about Attar are Eduard G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2 (1906), and Margaret Smith, ed., *The Persian Mystics: Attar* (1932). Attar is represented in A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization as Depicted in the Original Texts* (1964), and James Kritzeck, ed., *Anthology of Islamic Literature: From the Rise of Islam to Modern Times* (1966). For a discussion of the Sufism of Attar, see A. J. Arberry, *Sufism: An Account of the Mystics of Islam* (1950), and Idries Shah, *The Sufis* (1964). In 2002, an international conference entitled 'Farid al-Din Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition' was held by the Iran Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the Center of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and the University of London. The conference, which was convened by Dr Leonard Lewisohn, author, translator and researcher in the area of Islamic studies and a specialist in Persian language and Sufi literature, and Christopher Shackle, Professor of Modern Language of South Asia at SOAS at the University of London, was the centerpiece of a number of musical, poetic and artistic events in London to celebrate Persian mysticism and the literary contributions of Farid

al-Din Attar.

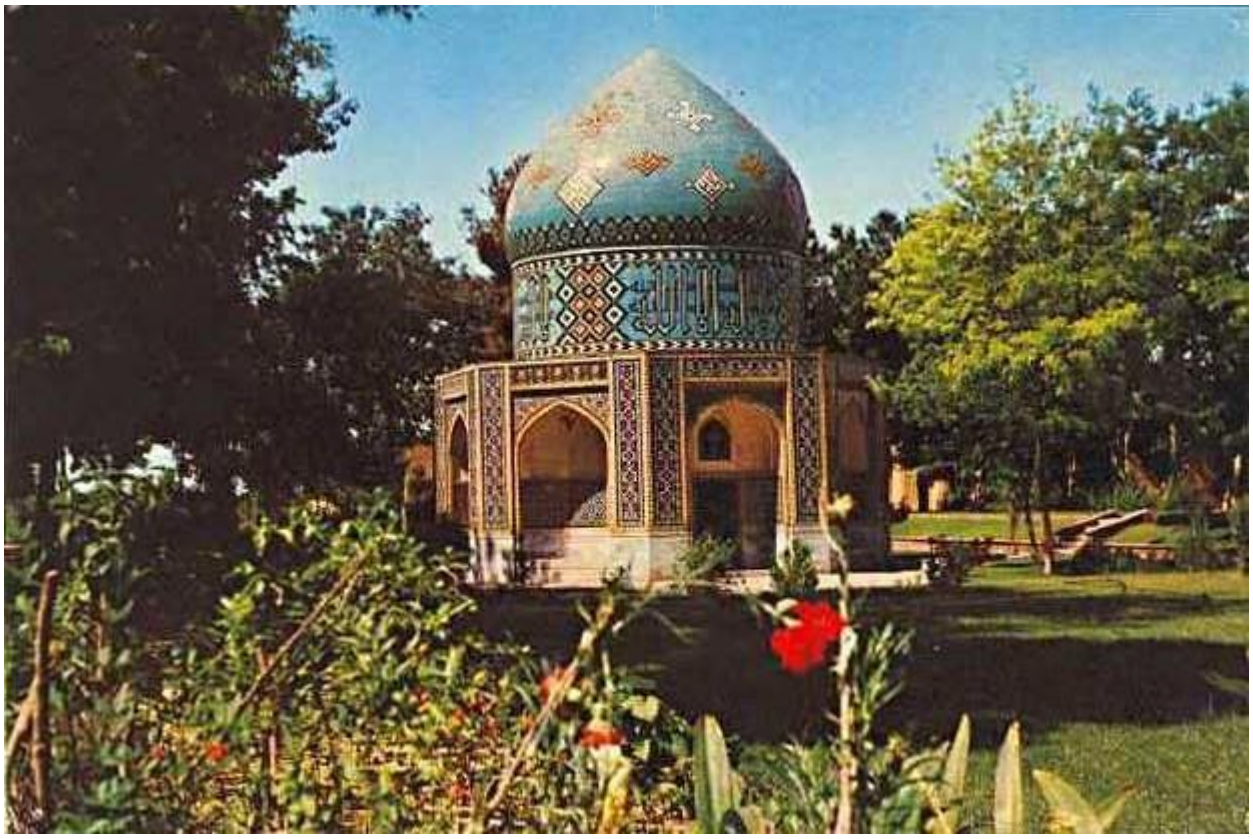
Attar's tomb in Nishapur attracts a large number of tourists every year who visit the historic city of Nishapur to pay tribute to this great Persian poet and writer. Nishapur (or Neyshăbur) is a city in the Razavi Khorasan province in north-eastern Iran, situated in a fertile plain at the foot of the Binalud Mountains, near the regional capital of Mashhad. Every year, concurrent with the commemoration day of Farid al-Din Attar Neishaburi on 14 April, a special ceremony is held in Nishapur, Razavi Khorasan province with the attendance of intellectuals, academic members, authors, students, etc. *Tadhkerat al-Awliya* (*Muslim Saints and Mystics*) is considered a world famous classical book of Persian literature which has been printed in many countries in many international languages, having inspirational stories from the lives of the earliest Sufis by the great thirteenth-century Persian Sufi poet, Farid al-Din Attar, the most famous work of its kind.

The thought-world depicted in Attar's works reflects the whole evolution of the Sufi movement. The starting point is the idea that the body-bound soul's awaited release and return to its source in the other world can be experienced during the present life in mystic union attainable through inward purification. By explaining his thoughts, the material used is not only specifically Sufi, but also from older ascetic legacies. Although his heroes are for the most part Sufis and ascetics, he also introduces stories from historical chronicles, collections of anecdotes, and

all types of highly-esteemed literature. His talent for perception of deeper meanings behind outward appearances enables him to turn details of everyday life into illustrations of his thoughts. The idiosyncrasy of Attar's presentations invalidates his works as sources for study of the historical persons whom he introduces. As sources on the hagiology and phenomenology of Sufism, however, his works have immense value. Judging from Attar's writings, he viewed the ancient Aristotelian heritage with scepticism and dislike. Interestingly, he did not want to uncover the secrets of nature. This is particularly remarkable in the case of medicine, which fell within the scope of his profession.

He obviously had no motive for showing off his secular knowledge in the manner customary among court panegyrists, whose type of poetry he despised and never practiced. Such knowledge is only brought into his works in contexts where the theme of a story touches on a branch of natural science.

Attar’s Mausoleum in Nishapur, Iran



Inscription on Attar's tomb as translated by Garcin de Tassy

God is Eternal…Here in this garden of a lower Eden, Attar perfumed the soul of the humblest of men. This is the tomb of a man so eminent that the dust stirred by his feet would have served as collyrium to the eye of the firmament…and of whom the saints were disciples…In the year of the Hijra 586 he was pursued by the sword of the army which devoured everything, being martyred in the massacre which then took place…Increase, O Lord, his merit…May the glory be with Him who

> dies not and holds in his hands the keys to unlimited forgiveness and infinite punishment.

His grand book *Tadhkerat al-Awliya* in prose and his most famous works in verse include:

Asrarnameh
Elahinameh
Mosibatnameh
Manteq-u'ttair
Bulbulnameh
Heydarnameh
Mokhtarnameh, and
Khosrownameh.

In the preface to the 'Memorial' (*Muslim Saints and Mystics*), Attar lists his reasons for writing the book, but not the sources used by him. His declared motives, as summarized by R. A. Nicholson, are as follows.

1. He was begged to do so by his religious brethren.
2. He hoped that some of those who read the work would bless the author, and, thus, possibly, secure his welfare beyond the grave.
3. He believed that the words of the saints were profitable even to those who could not put them into practice, inasmuch as they strengthen aspiration and destroy self-conceit.
4. Jonaid said, 'Their sayings are one of the armies of Almighty God whereby He confirms and reinforces the disciple, if his heart be dejected.'

5. According to the Prophet, ‘Mercy descends at the mention of the pious’: peradventure, if one spreads a table on which mercy falls like rain, he will not be turned away portionless.
6. Attar trusted that the blessed influence of the saints may be vouchsafed to him and bring him happiness before he died.
7. He busied himself with their sayings in the hope that he might make himself resemble them.
8. The Koran and the Traditions cannot be understood without knowledge of Arabic, wherefore most people are unable to profit by them; and the Sayings of the Saints, which form a commentary on the Koran and the Traditions, were likewise uttered, for the most part, in Arabic. Consequently, the author has translated them into Persian, in order that they may become accessible to all.
9. Since an idle word often excites keen resentment, the word of Truth is capable of having a thousandfold effect even though you are unconscious thereof. Similarly, Abd al-Rahman Eskafi said that the reading of the Koran was effectual, although the reader might not understand it, just as a potion of which the ingredients are unknown.
10. Spiritual words alone appeal to the author. Hence, he composed this ‘daily task’ for his contemporaries, hoping to find some persons to share the meal which he had provided.
11. The Imam Yusof Hamadhani advised some people, who asked him what they should do when the saints had passed away from the earth, to read eight pages of their

sayings every day. Attar felt that it was incumbent upon him to supply this desideratum.

12. From his childhood he had a predilection for the Sufis and took delight in their sayings. When such words are spoken only by impostors and when true spiritualists became as rare as the philosopher's stone, he resolved to popularise literature of this kind so far as lay in his power.

13. In the present age the best men are bad, and holy men have been forgotten. The Memorial was designed to remedy this state of things.

14. The Sayings of the Saints dispose men to renounce the world, meditate on the future life, love God, and set about preparing for their last journey.

One may say that there does not exist in all creation a better book than this, for their words are a commentary on the Koran and Traditions, which are the best of all words. Any one who reads it properly will perceive what passion must have been in the souls of those men to bring forth such deeds and words as they have done and said.

15. A further motive was the hope of obtaining their intercession hereafter and of being pardoned, like the dog of the Seven Sleepers which, though it be all skin and bone, will nevertheless be admitted to Paradise.

In his preface, Attar mentions three books which he recommends for those ambitious to attain a full understanding of the pronouncements of the Sufis.

These he entitles: *Ketab Sharh al-Qalb* (*The Exposition*

of the Heart), *Ketab Kashf al-Asrar* (*The Revelation of the Secrets*), and *Ketab Ma'refat al-Nafs wa'l-Rabb* (*The Knowledge of the Self and of the Lord*). No clue is given here to the authorship of these works, but Attar refers in one other context (II, 99) to the *Sharh al-Qalb* as a book of his own composition; see also Attar's introduction to his own *Mukhtar-Namah*.

It may, therefore, be deduced that Attar was the author of the other two titles. No copy of any of the three has so far been recovered. Attar wrote 96 Episodes in his book *Tadhkerat al-Awliya*, as follows.

1. Ja'far al-Sadeq
2. Owais al-Qarani
3. al-Hasan al-Basri
4. Malek ibn Dinar
5. Mohammad ibn Wase'
6. Habib al-'Ajami
7. Abu Hazem al-Makki
8. Otba al-Gholam
9. Rabe'a al-'Adawiya
10. al-Fozail ibn 'Iyaz
11. Ebrahim ibn Adham
12. Beshr al-Hafi
13. Dho 'l-Nun al-Mesri
14. Abu Yazid al-Bestami
15. Abd Allah ibn al-Mobarak
16. Sofyan al-Thauri
17. Shaqiq al-Balkhi
18. Abu Hanifa

19. al-Shafe’i
20. Ahmad ibn Hanbal
21. Dawud al-Ta’i
22. al-Mohasebi
23. Abu Solaiman al-Dara’i
24. Mohammad ibn Sammak
25. Aslam al-Tusi
26. Ahmad ibn Harb
27. Hatem al-Asamm
28. al-Tostari
29. Ma’ruf al-Karkhi
30. Sari al-Saqati
31. Fath al-Mauseli
32. Ahmad ibn Abi ‘l-Hawari
33. Ahmad ibn Khazruya
34. Abu Torab al-Nakhshabi
35. Yahya ibn Mo’adh al-Razi
36. Shah ibn Shoja’ al-Kermani
37. Yusof ibn al-Hosain al-Razi
38. Abu Hafs al-Haddad
39. Hamdun al-Qassar
40. Mansur ibn ‘Ammar
41. al-Antaki
42. Abd Allah ibn Khobaiq
43. al-Jonaid
44. Amr ibn ‘Othman al-Makki
45. Abu Sa’id al-Kharraz
46. Abu ‘I-Hosain al-Nuri
47. Abu ‘Othman al-Hiri

48. Ibn al-Jalla’
49. Rowaim
50. Ibn ‘Ata’
51. Ebrahim al-Raqqi
52. Yusof ibn Asbat
53. al-Nahrajuri
54. Somnun
55. al-Morta’esh
56. Mohammad ibn al-Fazl
57. al-Bushanji
58. al-Termedhi
59. Abu Bakr al-Warraq
60. Abd Allah ibn Monazel
61. Ali ibn Sahl al-Esfahani
62. Khair al-Nassaj
63. Abu Hamza al-Khorasani
64. Ahmad ibn Masruq
65. Abd Allah al-Maghrebi
66. Abu Ali al-Juzajani
67. Abu Bakr al-Kattani
68. Ibn Khafif
69. Abu Mohammad al-Jorairi
70. Al-Hallaj
71. Abu Baker wasti
72. Abu Omeru Naqil
73. Jafer Jildi
74. Abul Khair Qatah
75. Abu Abdallah Mohamed Bin Hussain
76. Abu Ishaque Garzoni

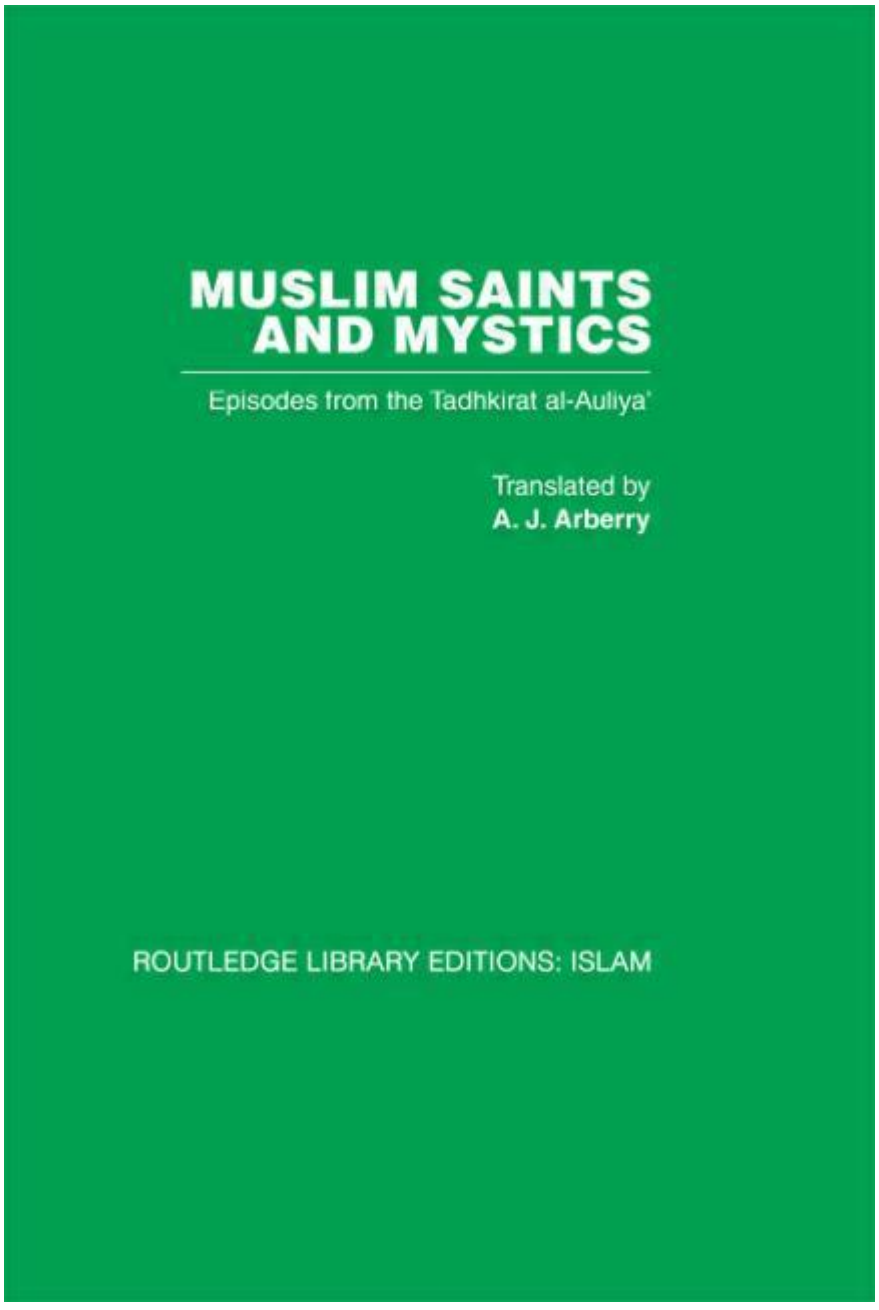
77. Abul hasan Qarqani.
78. al-Shebli
79. Abu Nasser Siraj
80. Abul Abbas Qasab
81. Ebrahim al-Khauwas
82. Memshad al-Dinawari
83. Abu Ishauqe Ibrahim Shebani
84. Abu Baker Sayedlani
85. Abu Hamza Mohammd Bin Ibrahim Baghdadi
86. Abu Ali Daqaq
87. Shaikh Abu Ali Saqfi
88. Abu Ali Ahmed Rudbari
89. Shaikh Abul Hasan Ali Jafri
90. Abu Osman al-Maghrabi
91. Shaikh Abul Abbas Nahwandi
92. Abu Omeru Ibrahim Zajaji
93. Sheikh Abul Hasan Saiq
94. Abul Qasim Nasarabadi
95. Abul Fadhel Hasan Sarqasi
96. Abul Abbas Alsayari

Thirty-Eight Episodes translated by A. J. Arberry

An abridgement, translated by A. J. Arberry, of Attar's only known prose work *Tadhkerat al-Awliya* (*Muslim Saints and Mystics*) which he worked on throughout much of his life was available publicly before his death. Arberry's translation is an abridgement, consisting of only the following chapters.

https://www.crcpress.com/Muslim-Saints-and-Mystics-Episodes-from-the-Tadhkirat-al-Auliya-Memorial/Attar/p/book/9780415442565

1. Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya' (Memorial of the Saints)



Preview this Book

Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat al-Auliya' (Memorial of the Saints)

1st Edition

Farid al-Din Attar

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• Description

Summary

This is a major work of Islamic mysticism by the great thirteenth-century Persian poet, Farid al-Din Attar. Translated by A J Arberry, Attar's work and thought is set in perspective in a substantial introduction.

The details of 38 episodes are which are added in this book is as follows.

3. Hasan of Basra

4. Malek Ibn Dinar
6. Habib al-Ajami
9. Rabe’a al-Adawiya
10. Al-Fozail Ibn Iyaz
11. Ebrahim Ibn Adham
12. Beshr Ibn al-Hareth
13. Dho ‘l-Nun al-Mesri
14. Abu Yazid al-Bestami
15. Abd Allah Ibn al-Mobarak
16. Sofyan al-Thauri
17. Shaqiq of Balkh
21. Dawud al-Ta’i
22. al-Mohasebi
26. Ahmad Ibn Harb
27. Hatem al-Asamm
28. Sahl Ibn Abd Allah al-Tostari
29. Ma’ruf al-Karkhi
30. Sari al-Saqati
33. Ahmad Ibn Khazruya
35. Yahya Ibn Mo’adh
36. Shah Ibn Shoja’
37. Yusof Ibn al-Hosain
38. Abu Hafs al-Haddad
43. Abo’l-Qasem al-Jonaid
44. Amr Ibn Othman
45. Abu Sa’id al-Kharraz
46. Abul-Hosain al-Nuri
47. Abu Othman al-Hiri
50. Ibn Ata

54. Somnun
58. al-Termedhi
62. Khairal-Nassaj
67. Abu Baker al-Katani
68. IbnKhafif
70. al-Hallaj
78. al-Shebli
81. Ebrahimal-Khauwas

And the above episodes are available on many websites.

Tadhkerat al-Awliya is a biography of Muslim saints and mystics. In what is considered the most compelling entry in this book, Attar relates the story of the execution of Hallaj, the mystic who had uttered the words, 'I am the Truth' in a state of ecstatic contemplation. Attar wrote 114 pieces, the same number of *suras* in the holy book of Quran. About 30 of his works survived.

Influence on Rumi

Attar died fleeing the Mongol hordes under Genghis Khan. Just before his death, Attar met a young poet, Rumi, to whom he gave some of his philosophical poems. Rumi perpetuated and added to the philosophical development of Sufism and the understanding of Attar.

Attar is one of the most famous mystic poets of Iran. His works were the inspiration of Rumi and many other mystic poets. Attar and Sanai were two of the greatest influences on Rumi in his Sufi views. Rumi has

mentioned both of them with the highest esteem several times in his poetry. Rumi praises Attar as follows.

‘Attar roamed the seven cities of love—We are still just in one alley.’

Rumi’s Mausoleum in Kunya,Turkey.

The Second Episode about Owaise of Qarni

In *Tadhkerat al-Awliya*, Attar wrote the second episode about Owaise of Qarni, and in the famous book of poetry, *Masnavi* by Jalaleddin Rumi, the following is said by Prophet Muhammad about Oveys Gharni.

The prophet Muhammad says that the breeze brings

o'men
The divine perfume from Yemen.
The scent of ramin comes from Oveys
The fragrance of God from Oveys.
Ovey's heavenly perfume from God,
Overjoyed the heart of the prophet of God.
Forsaking his mortal being willingly
That earthly (Oveys) become heavenly.

Publication note for the second episode by David Rosenbaum of the New York Times

Farid al-Din Attar is considered one of the pre-eminent mystical poets of the Persian literary tradition. The duration of his life is uncertain, though he can be placed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries C.E. Born in Nishapur in what is today Iran, Attar apparently was a pharmacist, but little information about his personal life is known. During his lifetime, he is believed to have written approximately nine books, including such famous works as the *Mantiq al-Tayr* (*The Conference of the Birds*) and the *Ilahi-Nama* (*The Book of God*).

Muslim Saints and Mystics is an abridgement, translated by A. J. Arberry, of Attar's only known prose work, *Tadhkerat al-Awliya*, which he worked on throughout much of his life and which was available publicly before Arberry's death. In what is considered the most compelling entry in this book, Attar relates the story of the execution of Hallaj, the mystic who had uttered the words, 'I am the Truth' in a state of ecstatic contemplation.

Arberry's translation is an abridgement; the entry on Owaise al-Qarani translated by Mohammed Abdul Hafeez B.com., Hyderabad India omitted in Arberry's text, is available at the following link: Owaise al-Qarani.

Website on which the second episode is available

Owaise of Qarni
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Owaise of Qarni, trans. from Urdu to English by Mohammed Abdul Hafeez B.Com, Hyderabad, India, reference book.
http://www.omphaloskepsis.com/ebooks/pdf/Owaise.pdf

As a pharmacist. Attar was a pen name which he took for his occupation. 'Attar' means herbalist, druggist or perfumist, and during his lifetime in Persia, much of medicine and drugs were based on herbs. Therefore, by profession, he was similar to a modern-day town doctor and pharmacist.

Three phases of Attar's creativity

Classification of the various works by these two criteria yields virtually identical results. The German orientalist Hellmut Ritter at first thought that the problem could be explained by the spiritual evolution of the poet. He distinguished three phases of Attar's creativity:

- Works in which mysticism is in perfect balance with a finished, storyteller's art.
- Works in which a pantheistic zeal gains the upper hand over literary interest.
- Works in which the ageing poet idolizes Imam Ali ibn Abu Talib while there is no trace of ordered thoughts and

descriptive skills. Ritter surmised that the last phase, that of old age, was coincidental with a conversion to Shi'ism. However, in 1941, the Persian scholar Nafisi was able to prove that the works of the third phase in Ritter's classification were written by another Attar who lived about two hundred and fifty years later at Mashhad and was a native of Tun (source: Internet search).

English translation history of the book Tadkera Awiliya

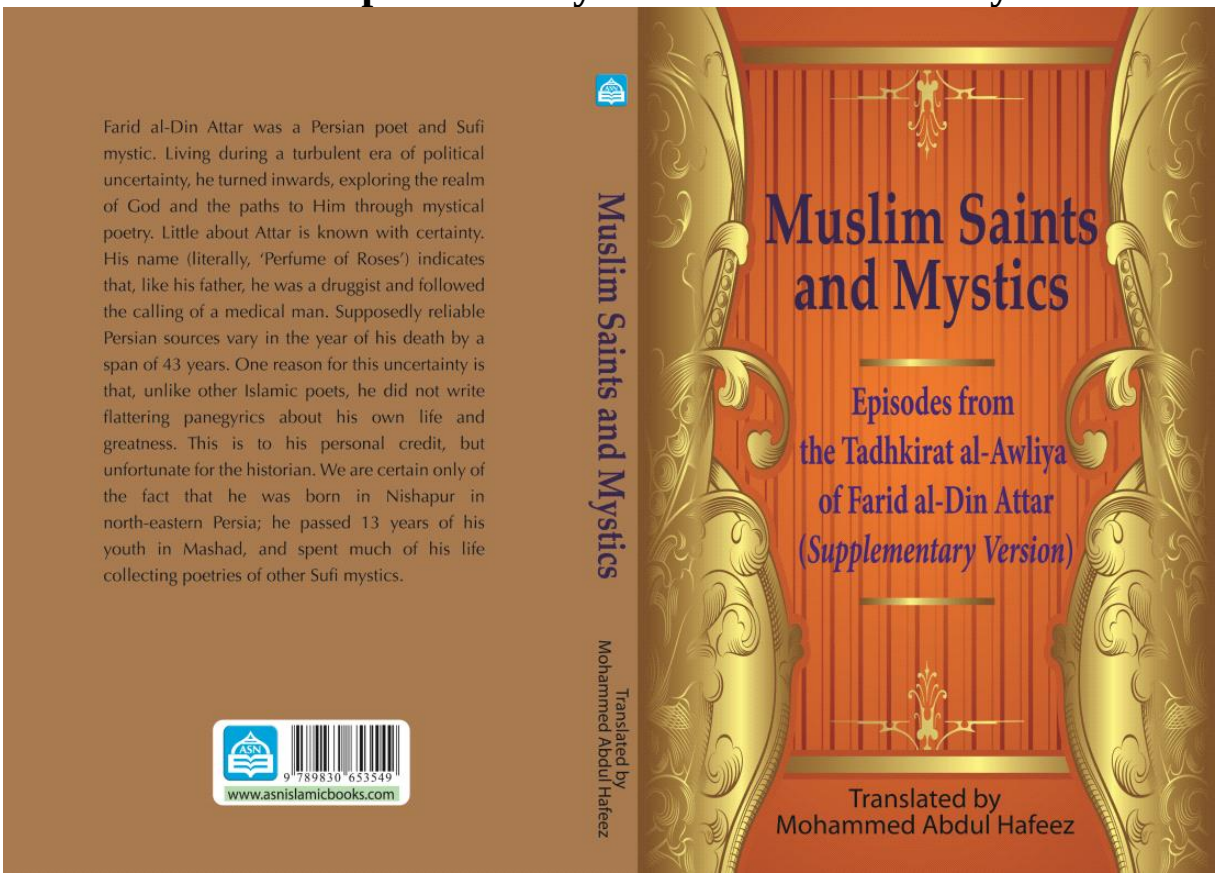
In English, there are two partial translations of the *Taḏkera*. The first, by Bankey Bahari (Lahore, 1965) and who translated only 62 episodes very briefly and the second, a more accurate one, by Arthur J. Arberry, (London, 1966) and which was a abridge edition of 38 episodes. This translation also contains detailed bibliographic information and supplies a most valuable list of sources and analogues for the various anecdotes and aphorisms at the beginning of each separate chapter. A complete translation by Paul Losensky of Indiana University is forthcoming in 2004. Other translations are mentioned in the general bibliography below.

In the year 2014 A.S. Noordeen Malysia has published book Tadkera Awiliya translated by Mohammed Abdul Hafeez from Hyderabad India in which there are found 58 episodes which were not yet translated by Arthur J. Arberry and this book is available on Amazon.com and Archive.org and there is good preface in the book with historical information of the book which is found in it.

An Ad for my book

Muslim Saints and Mystics' Episodes from the *Tadhkirat al-Awliya* of Farid al-Din Attar

Is already released and its selling price is RM 35.00 per copy and which can be had directly from Malaysia from the below address. This book was first published by AS Noor Deen in the year 2014.


Farid al-Din Attar was a Persian poet and Sufi mystic. Living during a turbulent era of political uncertainty, he turned inwards, exploring the realm of God and the paths to Him through mystical poetry. Little about Attar is known with certainty. His name (literally, 'Perfume of Roses') indicates that, like his father, he was a druggist and followed the calling of a medical man. Supposedly reliable Persian sources vary in the year of his death by a span of 43 years. One reason for this uncertainty is that, unlike other Islamic poets, he did not write flattering panegyrics about his own life and greatness. This is to his personal credit, but unfortunate for the historian. We are certain only of the fact that he was born in Nishapur in north-eastern Persia; he passed 13 years of his youth in Mashad, and spent much of his life collecting poetries of other Sufi mystics.
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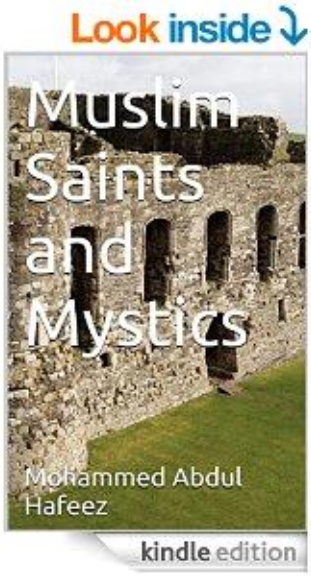

This book is already released by Amazon books U.S.A. during the year 2014 and its selling price is USD 5.00 per copy and which can be had directly the from the below address.

In this book three lengthy episodes of Farid al-Din Attar's book '*Muslim Saints and Mystics'are* added and in which world famous episode about Sheikh Abul Hasan Qarqani is available and it is informed of the general public and other learned persons of knowledge of saints and mysticism that the biographical details of Sheikh Abul Hasan Qarqani are not found except in this episode of this book. Address is given as follows from which this book can be had directly.

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In this book, translation of the following 58 episodes omitted in Arberry's text are included which are as follows.

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Reference books:

1. Sheikh Farid al-Din Attar, *Tazkeratul Aoulia* (*Book of Muslim Saints and Mystics*), Urdu trans., Majedi Book Depot, Kanpur, 1383 A.H., India.
2. Sheikh Farid al-Din Attar, *Tazkeratul Aoulia* (*Book of Muslim Saints and Mystics*), Urdu trans., Anwar Book Depot, New Delhi, India.

Some links of the book on which this book is available.

https://www.google.com/search?q=tadhkirat+al-auliya&rlz=1C1CHBD_enIN810IN810&oq=TADHKIRATAL+AULIYA+&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j35i39j0l2.19775j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

THE END.